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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2009

In Today's Papers

The Tenth Wave of Ergenekon Detentions

All papers give extensive front page coverage to yesterday's new detentions related to the Ergenekon case. Mainstream Sabah's headline reads "Tsunami in Ergenekon," mainstream Hurriyet's headline reads "Another Ergenekon Wave and Its Aftershocks," and leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet criticizes the operation as an attempt by the AKP to squelch political opposition in "A Revenge Operation." All papers report that simultaneous operations staged yesterday constituted the 10th wave of detentions in the Ergenekon case. Sabah reports that a total of 38 people were detained in six provinces upon the demand of Istanbul prosecutor Zekeriya Oz. Milliyet notes that this is the first wave of Ergenekon-related detentions that hit the judicial system. Former Secretary General of National Security Council General Tuncer Kilinc, former General Staff Judicial Adviser General Erdal Senel and former chairman of Higher Education Board (YOK) Kemal Guruz are among the detainees. Liberal Radikal reports that the police searched the residence of the Honorary Chief Public Prosecutor Sabih Kanadoglu but did not detain him. Former Mayor of Istanbul and the founder of the ISTEK foundation, Bedrettin Dalan, was the target of the Istanbul leg of the operation. Foundation buildings belonging to Dalan, who is currently in the US, were searched by the police and his son was detained. Papers note that, following the detentions, the Chief of Turkish General Staff General Ilker Basbug met with his commanders for six hours to assess the situation. The Court of Appeals decided to hold a meeting today to discuss the developments. Hurriyet and Cumhuriyet report that main opposition party CHP leader Deniz Baykal reacted to the operations strongly and said "this is a revenge operation" and "it is politically motivated. The Ergenekon operation is now an operation against those who dare to criticize the AKP."

Umur Talu writes in mainstream Sabah: "We cannot accuse the Ergenekon detainees at this point. They are only suspects, and we should wait for the trial process before judging them. However in the meantime, the independence of the judiciary remains a valid concern."

Ismet Berkan writes in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "On one level, there is a serious component to this ongoing investigation. On another level, there is also a serious attempt to gather up political opponents into the basket."

Murat Yetkin writes in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "This Ergenekon investigation began as a clean-up operation against the deep state structure. But now the Ergenekon operation looks like a witch hunt for the AKP's political opponents. The arrests of major public figures are exposed without even indicting them."

Oktaay Eksi writes in mainstream Hurriyet: "We would like to believe that the operation targets deep state elements, but seeing the former Higher Education Board President and the former Yargitay President detained indicates state-sponsored terror."

Derya Sazak writes in mainstream Milliyet: "If the goal of this case is to uncover Gladio/Deep State, this case must come to a speedy conclusion. Otherwise, the operation will end up looking like an operation by a police state."

Ali Bayramoglu writes in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "There were two failed attempts by army commanders to topple the government in 2003-04, and their organizational scheme continues today. There are groups that seek to topple the government through rallies, protests and other acts, and the ongoing Ergenekon operation is targeting them."

Nazli Ilicak writes in mainstream Sabah: "Organizers of pro-secular rallies dreamed of toppling the government. Therefore seeing famous

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figures in the list is no surprise at all."

Tamer Korkmaz writes in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "The Turkish deep state links to the deep state in Washington. The ongoing operation in Turkey is, in a way, an attempt to root out the Washington-based scheme."

Natural Gas Crisis Favors Nabucco

Cumhuriyet reports that Russia's decision to cut off the natural gas flow to Europe through the western line has strengthened Turkey's hand. Based on comments from the Western press, the report emphasizes that many countries would support the Nabucco project as a alternative source of natural gas during the Nabucco summit scheduled to take place in Budapest on January 26 and 27.

Weapons Silenced for Three Hours in Gaza. (Hurriyet)

Media outlets warn of an impending second front with Lebanon, while expressing distrust of Israel's move toward a ceasefire. Liberal Radikal reports, "Hezbollah is ready for war," as "Hezbollah Leader Hasan Nasrallah threatens to open up a second front in the war," with "tens of thousands of Lebanese who are ready to fight." Islamist-oriented Zaman echoes the same thing in "Nasrallah Sends a Second Front Message to Israel." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet criticizes the Egyptian-French ceasefire initiative in, "Diplomacy Comes Very Late," as "Israel continues to broaden its attack." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports Israel, "Says 'Yes' to a Ceasefire," but "The Massacre Continues." Leftist Taraf reports, "A Break Comes Only after 670 Deaths." Mainstream Sabah reports, "A Three-Hour Break for the Massacre." Meanwhile, mainstream Hurriyet reports, " Hamas uses tunnels in order to smuggle weapons in from Egypt," which "pose an obstacle to any ceasefire plans." Mainstream Milliyet reports, "There is hope for the ceasefire," but notes, "Children in Gaza suffered trauma under the first intifada," and "experts now fear this generation will also suffer trauma and become more aggressive."

In related stories, media outlets charge that Europe and Turkey are experiencing a resurgence in anti-Semitism. Milliyet reports "In Europe, the Enemies of the Jews Are Increasing in Number," and notes, "Since the Israeli incursion into Gaza, attacks have increased against synagogues and Jewish targets in the UK, France, and Belgium." Islamist-oriented Zaman also reports, "Israel's Bloody Attacks in Gaza Raise Tensions in Europe," as "tensions between Muslims and Jews are on the rise," and "thousands have

filled the streets with some protests supporting Israel and some protests supporting Gaza." The front page of liberal Radikal carries the headline, "Turkey's Shameless Racism," next to a photo of Turks with a placard that reads, "No Jews or Armenians Allowed," and another one that reads, "Dogs Are Free to Enter."

Iran Representative Visits Ankara to Shore Up Opposition to U.S., Israel. Liberal Radikal reports Iran wants to "form an alliance to put pressure on the U.S. and Israel." According to Radikal, Iranian President Ahmadinejad sent Iran's High Council of National Security General Secretary Said Celili to Ankara for a meeting with President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan. Yesterday, they met for two hours, where Celili suggested to Erdogan, "Let's work with the Arabs who are behind us in order to come down hard on Israel and the U.S." because "there is no unity in the Arab world on this issue and it makes us uncomfortable." Meanwhile, Radikal reports President Gul said, "There is a new American administration that is coming to Washington and we hope they will take a more active role in the conflict between Palestine and Israel."

Editorial Opinion on Gaza Operations

Akif Emre wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "At this stage, any peacekeeping force in Gaza would be an American project with the goal of limiting Iranian influence through Hamas and ensuring the

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protection of Israel. Turkey should never become a part of this plot."

Mehmet Y. Yilmaz wrote in Hurriyet: "Prime Minister Erdogan's strongly harsh rhetoric against Israel has nothing to do with victims of Gaza operation. He deliberately delivers a political message to the anti-semitic roots in his party."

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- Ergenekon suspects taken into custody in Sivas allegedly were plotting the assassination of an Armenian activist in the city.
- A Court rejects a request for the release of jailed Ergenekon suspect Hursit Tolon.
- PM Erdogan issues messages for unity at a Muharrem dinner with Alevis.
- Somali pirates release a Turkish cargo ship hijacked in October after its owners paid a ransom.
- An IMF delegation comes to Turkey for talks on a stand by agreement.

International News

- An anonymous Middle Eastern Diplomat says Turkey is going to undertake the task of establishing a multinational peacekeeping force in Gaza.
- Hamas spokesman Ghazi Hamad said he is optimistic that a cease fire would be reached within this week or early next week.
- French President Sarkozy speaks on the phone to Turkish PM Erdogan to discuss the conditions for temporary cease fire declaration in the Middle East.

JEFFREY